



12

Humanities Montana awards five grants

Humanities Montana recently awarded the following grants:

- **Flathead Valley Community College, Kalispell:** \$3,500 for “Science Matters: Skepticism, Literacy, and the Search for Truth,” a five-part lecture series.

- **Great Falls High School, Great Falls:** \$4,974 for an annual history research fair, with the Young Chautauqua offering a living history component to the “WarFair” Project.

- **Big Sky Film Institute, Missoula:** \$4,000 for the Big Sky Film Festival Errol Morris Retrospective, featuring documentary Errol Morris and his 40 years of film work. The festival is Feb. 14-23 in Missoula.

- **Washington State University in Pullman:** \$6,750 for mobile storytelling, documentary shorts, and a website that will create an interactive experience for viewers and tribal members to understand the impact of the 1964 floods on the Blackfeet Reservation. The documentary will be screened at the 50th anniversary memorial, June 8, 2014.

- **Bozeman Public Library:** \$1,000 for the sixth annual Children’s Festival of the Book, the only book festival in the state dedicated solely to children’s literature.

For more information on Humanities Montana grant programs, visit humanitiesmontana.org.

Smithsonian doll exhibition highlights traditional Native American design and clothing

An exhibition of meticulously handmade dolls is on display through Jan. 5 at the Smithsonian’s National Museum of the American Indian in the “Grand Procession: Dolls from the Charles and Valerie Diker Collection.”

Typically made by Native women using buffalo hair, hide, porcupine quills and shells, figures like these have long served as both toys and teaching tools for American Indian communities. Outfitted in intricate regalia, these dolls – on loan from the Charles and Valerie Diker Collection – represent the work of five contemporary artists: Rhonda Holy Bear (Cheyenne River Lakota), Joyce Growing Thunder (Assiniboine/Sioux), Juanita Growing Thunder Fogarty (Assiniboine/Sioux), Jessa Rae Growing Thunder (Assiniboine/Sioux) and Jamie Okuma (Luiseño and Shoshone-Bannock).

Their craftsmanship and attention to detail imbue these figures with a remarkable presence and power, turning a centuries-old tradition into a contemporary art form.

Through their brightly colored designs and accoutrements, each figure tells a unique story about a specific time and place. “Holy Bear’s Maternal Journey,” for example, depicts how a Crow woman caring for twins would have appeared as she traveled with her family across the Plains. The mother’s jingle dress and the horse’s regalia pay tribute to the magnificent beadwork and impressive equestrian parades for which the Crow are known and the male and female twins in the travois represent a Lakota origin story.

For the Growing Thunders, creating dolls has always been a family affair. Born on the Fort Peck Reservation in Montana, Joyce Growing Thunder began learning beadwork and quillwork as a 10-year-old child and later handed down these skills to her daughter, Juanita, and granddaughter, Jessica.

One of the exhibition’s objects, “Buffalo Chaser,” not only represents a collaboration between grandmother and granddaughter, it also symbolizes the passing of tradition from one generation to the next. Today, Joyce and Juanita continue to make dolls together at the same table in their shared household.

For more information and public programs, visit nmai.si.edu/home/.

NOTE: The government shutdown triggered the temporary shutdown of the Museum of the American Indian in New York and Washington, DC, as well as the temporary shutdown of the Museum of the Plains Indian in Browning.

First Peoples Fund celebrates release of Creative Economy Study

An in-depth study of the Native American art market – the first of its kind in the United States – has been released to elevate an awareness of the impact art has on the economic sustainability of artists, and entire communities.

First Peoples Fund administered the American Indian Creative Economy Market Study Project survey in the fall of 2011 through a partnership with the Northwest Area Foundation, Artspace, Colorado State University and Leveraging Investments in Creativity.

The survey took a close look at household economics, social networks and infrastructural needs of Native artists, examined the support programs available for them, and made the case for art as an economic driver of the community. Almost 75% of the information collected was on the Pine Ridge and Cheyenne River Indian Reservations.

NATIVE NEWS

Native News compiled by
Dyani Bingham
(dyani_b@hotmail.com)
for *State of the Arts*

The project revealed that not only is art a viable underground market on the reservation, but it also has the potential to be a leading economic driver if fueled with the right resources.

“So many artists are relying on their work to provide for themselves and their families,” said Lori Pourier, president of First Peoples Fund. “There is no doubt that this project will help not only First Peoples Fund, but communities around the country, to help connect and secure support for those artists.”

Some of the key points of the survey

include:

- 30% of Native peoples are practicing or potential artists, and most live below the poverty line.
- 51% of Native households depend on home-based enterprises for cash income.
- 79% of those home-based enterprises consist of some form of traditional arts.
- Emerging artists travel an average of 51 miles to collect supplies.
- Only 1% of emerging artists have a formal relationship with a bank or financial institution.
- Only 6% of artists on the reservation said

they felt they had “formal” and “informal” support.

- 28% of emerging artists received training from a formal institution (higher education, nonprofit, business), while 47% said they learned informally (friends, family and elders).

Justin Huenemann, a program officer at the Northwest Area Foundation and partner in the project, said the report shines a light on one of the greatest untapped economic development engines on the reservation. Pourier agreed.

“We have always known that art is deeply intertwined in the history and culture of these communities,” she said. “But to now have a road map of how to take that art – art that is both intrinsically and economically valuable – and get it into the marketplace, is exciting.”

The report also details the areas that Native artists rely on for success, including access to capital, financial education, increased knowledge of the distribution networks that support artists, access to markets and professional development training.

Download the full report and read more about the survey at www.firstpeoplesfund.org/impact/market-study.html.

Native actors from Montana appear on the big screen

Native actors from Montana are becoming more present on the big screen and that has coincided with

more Hollywood movies focusing on a more complex view of Native characters and reservation life. From Chaske Spencer (Assiniboine/Sioux) from the Ft. Peck reservation to Misty Upham (Blackfeet), Montana’s Native American actors are on the rise.

With films like “Winter in the Blood” and “Jimmy P.” being filmed on or near reservations on Montana’s Hi-Line, the beauty and intensity of the Montana landscape also plays a major part in bringing these stories to life.

For more information on Montana’s film opportunities, visit www.montanafilm.com.



Netakoda by Joyce Growing
Thunder (Assiniboine/Sioux)



Actress Missy Upham

Blackfeet Actress Misty Upham on filming “Jimmy P.” with Benicio Del Toro

By Rob Schmidt

Reprinted with permission from *Indian Country Today Media Network*

Blackfeet actress Misty Upham (“Frozen River” and the new “Osage County”) is one of several Native stars who appear in “Jimmy P.: Psychotherapy of a Plains Indian,” which showed at the Cannes Film Festival in May. The film, starring Benicio Del Toro and directed by Arnaud Desplechin, had its U.S. premiere on Oct. 1 at the New York Film Festival. Upham took a few moments to reflect on the experience of working with Del Toro and making a movie on her home rez.

Q: Tell us about your character Jane and her relationship with Jimmy Picard.

A: I play his childhood sweetheart. His first love. The mother of his child. I come in at the end when his mind is beginning to open up. Jimmy broke Jane’s heart and it’s really sweet to see how he tries to fix that.

Q: What was it like working with Benicio Del Toro?

A: Amazing. He’s very shy and reserved. A gentleman and really generous. He asked me to ride back to set with him one day and gave me this amazing pep talk and promised we’d work together again.

Q: How did this shoot compare to others you’ve been on?

A: It was short. It was also on my rez. It didn’t feel like a shoot. Felt like a visit. I was only there for about 10 days. My family came along and we got to see our family. I was waiting to hear if I got “August: Osage County” and the producers were all rooting for me and waiting to hear. They said we would have a party. We wrapped and the day I started the drive back to L.A. I got the call that I got the role of Johnna.

Q: How about working with French director Arnaud Desplechin? Did he have a different approach from the American directors you’ve worked with?

A: Yes! Very different. I watched him and the way he works is almost a self-torturing experience. He’s very hard on himself. But I like that because that means he really cares about his work. He’s a silent powerhouse. During lunch he would sleep. Everyone buzzing around him, all this noise, and there he was with his quiet zzzzz’s.

His direction is very clean and very simple but strong. I loved working with him. One day I was having trouble with a scene because I couldn’t find exactly what he wanted. I knew what he wanted, but I couldn’t harness it. I started crying and went outside. He came out and we smoked in silence. He made me feel better somehow, without saying a word. Very amazing person.

Q: Did you develop a bond with anyone during the shoot?

A: Yes. In particular, Jennifer Roth who produced “The Wrestler” and “Black Swan.”

She helped me in so many ways and when I went home to Seattle she threw a party for me to introduce me to the local industry. Really successful people are super generous. She’s definitely a mama bear. Her husband did sound for “August: Osage County” so she came to visit and it felt so good to see her again.

Q: Do you have any interesting or funny anecdotes you could share?

A: Michael Greyeyes and I had fun in the black-out entryway-to-dancehall scene. We were kind of trapped in there joking and laughing. Benicio would peek out like he was missing out on the fun.

Michael is hilarious and an amazing actor. He’s really great at blocking scenes as well.

I was having a cigarette with Benicio and Michael was there talking with us. We got called back in and I was gonna put my cig out on my shoe because I’m cheap like that and Benicio, being the gentleman he is, said, “Give it to me. I got it.” He threw down and stomped it out. I was like, “I was gonna save that.” All the Indians around us started laughing.